

Appl. No. 10/772,829
Amdt. dated April 14, 2008
Reply to Office Action of January 15, 2008

Remarks

The present amendment responds to the final Official Action dated January 15, 2008.

The Official Action rejected claims 1-16 under U.S.C. 103(a) based on Cohen U.S. Patent No. 6,560,576 (Cohen) in view of Ehlen U.S. Publication No. 2004/0060480 (Ehlen). Claims 1 and 11 have been amended to be more clear and distinct. Claims 1-16 are presently pending.

The Art Rejections

All of the claims were rejected based on Cohen standing in combination with Ehlen. As addressed in greater detail below, Cohen and Ehlen do not support the Official Action's reading of them and the rejections based thereupon should be reconsidered and withdrawn. Further, the Applicants do not acquiesce in the analysis of Cohen and Ehlen made by the Official Action and respectfully traverse the Official Action's analysis underlying its rejections.

The Official Action rejected claims 1-16 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) based on Cohen in view of Ehlen. In light of the present amendments to claims 1 and 11, this ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1, as amended, addresses a prompt selection module for selecting a prompt for presentation to a user, a prompt being a message from the system to the user calling for a user input appropriate to the function being performed, the prompt indicating the function being performed. The prompt selection module is operative to identify an experience level of a user relating to a user's relative familiarity or unfamiliarity with the function being performed and select a prompt appropriate to the user's experience level. Selection of prompts tends to favor

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the presentation of more abbreviated prompts to users with greater experience levels. The limitations of claim 1 in the claimed combination are not taught and are not made obvious by Cohen, Ehlen, or a combination thereof.

Cohen teaches the selection of introductory help prompts as a user is learning to use a system, with help prompts being selected to present information about different features of the system as the user gains experience. The expert help prompts of Cohen typically do not in themselves call for particular user inputs at a particular time, and instead seek to explain to the user various actions that can be performed. The expert help prompts of Cohen are more in the nature of tutorial information, rather than calls for response. The Applicants respectfully disagree with the Official Action's arguments that Cohen uses the experience level of a user to favor the presentation of more abbreviated prompts to experienced users. Instead, Cohen selects expert prompts as part of a course of instruction, with advanced prompts related to a particular feature being presented as relevant. Cohen does not suggest that these prompts are abbreviated, and does not contemplate the use of abbreviated expert prompts to guide a user whose experience level suggests that only a briefer instruction is required.

The Official Action cites Cohen, col. 5, lines 48-55 as support for the proposition that Cohen renders obvious selection of prompts tending to favor the presentation of more abbreviated prompts to users with greater experience levels. In the cited text, Cohen states that expert prompts are those played when the caller is more experienced and ready to learn about more sophisticated features. Such selection is not directed toward the selection of abbreviated prompts for more experienced users. Rather, the selection taught by Cohen is directed toward

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teaching the user about additional new features, and such teaching does not necessarily suggest the selection of an abbreviated prompt. Because the feature being introduced is new, the prompt rather than being abbreviated, would be as detailed as needed to convey the proper instruction, and the more complex the feature, the longer the prompt might need to be. As such, Cohen teaches away from the idea that a user's increased experience level tends toward the presentation of briefer prompts. See, for example, col. 5, lines 55-59, in which Cohen states that in one embodiment, only one expert prompt would be played per session, while multiple novice prompts might be played per session, and further states that in another embodiment, any particular expert prompt would be played to only one particular caller. Such discussion is in accordance with the idea that an expert prompt would be more elaborate than a novice prompt, and is contrary to the idea that an expert prompt would be abbreviated. If an expert prompt were contemplated as an abbreviated prompt, there would be no need to restrict the presentation of expert prompts to once per session, or to limit the presentation of each prompt to once per caller. Rather, such choices of presentation are in accordance with the idea that the expert prompts are to be used to introduce new features, with each such prompt being no longer needed once the feature has been introduced, and with the introduction of new features being conducted relatively gradually.

The presentation of abbreviated prompts to more experienced users, as addressed by claim 1, takes advantage of the fact that a more experienced user requires less detailed prompting to accomplish the same task. The expert prompts of Cohen are directed toward instructing the user about new ways of using the system, but the abbreviated prompts of the present invention

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are directed toward instructing the user about the same features with which he or she is familiar, in a less time consuming way. The Official Action cites col. 14, lines 52-58, as supporting the proposition that the system is able to accept abbreviated commands from a user, but ability to accept abbreviated or more efficient commands does not correspond to the ability or desire to use more abbreviated prompts for experienced users. The prompt informing the user of an alternative way of accomplishing a task is itself not an abbreviated prompt, but rather a prompt relating to a feature that has not been previously explained to the user by way of prompts. Claim 1, as amended, therefore defines over Cohen.

Adding Ehlen to Cohen does not cure Cohen's deficiencies as a reference with respect to claim 1. Ehlen is directed to the presentation of prompts that inform the user of multiple ways of using the system, and is relied on by the Official Action as teaching prompts as messages calling for appropriate user input and indicating the function being performed. Ehlen, however, does not address presenting abbreviated prompts for experienced users, as does the invention of claim 1. Claim 1, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

Claim 11, as amended, addresses selecting a prompt appropriate for the user experience level for the function indicating the user's relative familiarity or unfamiliarity with the function being performed, with the prompt being a message from the system to the user calling for a user input appropriate to the function being performed and indicating the function being performed. Selecting of a prompt tends to favor the presentation of more abbreviated prompts to users with higher experience levels while favoring the presentation of more elaborate prompts providing greater detail about the nature of input needed for users with lower experience levels. As noted

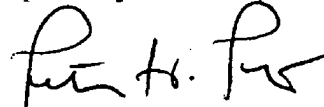
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above with respect to claim 1, selecting of a prompt so as to tend to favor the presentation of more abbreviated prompts to users with higher experience levels is not taught and is not made obvious by Cohen, Ehlen, or a combination thereof. Claim 11, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

Conclusion

All of the presently pending claims, as amended, appearing to define over the applied references, withdrawal of the present rejection and prompt allowance are requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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